

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-77 were originally pending in this application among which claims 8 and 22-77 have been withdrawn from consideration, i.e., claims 1-7 and 9-21 are currently pending. Claims 1, 10, 14 and 20 are independent. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 5 are amended and claims 2-4 and 9-21 are cancelled. No new matter has been added by this Amendment.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 9-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,502,484 to Okada ("Okada") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,210,563 to Hamada et al. ("Hamada"), and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,992,855 to Takei ("Takei"). Claims 2 and 5-7 have been objected to by the Examiner as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if re-written in independent form to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitation of claim 2. Thus, based on the Examiner's statement that claim 2 would be allowable if re-written in independent form, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 5-7, which depend either directly or indirectly from amended claim 1, are also asserted to be allowable.

Applicant believes that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

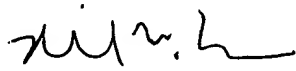
AUTHORIZATION

No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicant hereby petitions the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4510). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: July 6, 2004

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